



Remedial Education Program

Evaluation of effectiveness needed, improvements necessary to ensure best practices

BACKGROUND

As the agency that oversees K-12 education in the state, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) oversees the Remedial Education Program. REP is one of 18 instructional programs funded by the state's Quality Basic Education (QBE) funding formula.

Students in grades 6 through 12 who meet eligibility requirements specified in state law receive individualized basic skills instruction in reading, writing, or mathematics.

In fiscal year 2020, approximately 31,000 full-time equivalents were served in REP, generating approximately \$164 million, or 2% of total QBE earnings.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

GaDOE should:

- Evaluate REP student outcomes and consult with the General Assembly on whether REP should continue in its current form.
- Develop additional guidance related to REP.
- Consider dedicating staff to provide additional support.
- Periodically review and evaluate school systems' delivery of REP.

The General Assembly should:

- Assess whether systems should be provided more resources to implement MTSS.
- Consider removing the REP funding cap.
- Consider removing the funding class size for REP.

KEY FINDINGS

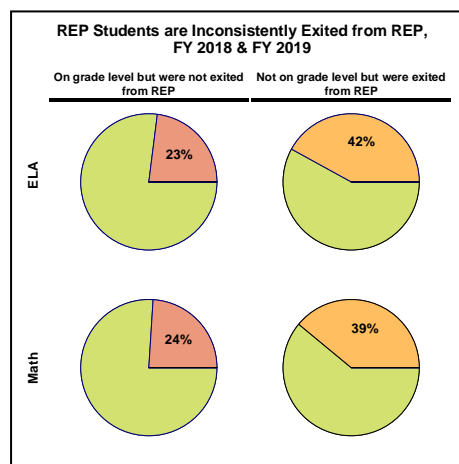
Although the Georgia Department of Education's (GaDOE) Remedial Education Program (REP) has existed for nearly 40 years, its impact on students has only been evaluated once in 2005. With the statewide adoption of system flexibility waivers in fiscal year 2016, school systems have more discretion in how they implement REP; however, the impact of these changes on REP student outcomes is unknown. While an evaluation of its effectiveness is necessary, we also identified multiple opportunities for operational improvements.

Under system flexibility, REP implementation has diverged from best practices and the funding formula intent.

- REP funding is based on a smaller student to teacher ratio (15 to 1) than the middle or high school general education programs; however, system flexibility allows school systems to waive maximum class size requirements. System flexibility also allows systems to waive teacher certification requirements.
- Although research indicates that smaller class sizes and teacher certification are important for improving student achievement, we found that systems often exceeded recommended maximum class size requirements, and systems did not always employ subject-certified teachers.

GaDOE should take additional steps to manage REP and support school systems.

- GaDOE has provided minimal direct oversight of REP. REP guidance provides little to no information on professional development or other resources.
- GaDOE has not provided consistent guidance on how systems should formally implement the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework with REP.
- GaDOE has not established exit criteria for REP; without this, systems have taken various approaches, which has created inconsistencies.



Some systems are unable to fully access REP funding.

- Unlike other QBE-funded instructional programs, REP has a funding cap that has prevented some rural, less wealthy systems from receiving full funding for serving students in REP.
- Five systems serve students performing below grade level through a variety of support services, but do not participate in REP. According to a few smaller systems, the funding class size of 15 students has prevented them from accessing funding for REP.